



Update: January 6, 2020 (original release: May 1, 2019)

Yve-Alain Bois of the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, Presents the 69th Annual A. W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts in 2020 at the National Gallery of Art, Washington



Yve-Alain Bois, distinguished expert in 20th-century art and professor in the School of Historical Studies at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, will give the 69th annual A. W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts on March 22, March 29, April 5, April 19, April 26, and May 3, 2020 at 2:00 p.m.

Washington, DC—The Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts (CASVA) at the National Gallery of Art has announced that Yve-Alain Bois, distinguished expert in 20th-century art and professor in the School of Historical Studies at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, will give the 69th annual A. W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts in 2020.

The lecture series, entitled *Transparence and Ambiguity: The Modern Space of Axonometry*, will be held in the East Building Auditorium at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, on March 22, March 29, April 5, April 19, April 26, and May 3, 2020 at 2:00 p.m.

In his six-part lecture series, Yve-Alain Bois will explore the various uses of a system of spatial representation called axonometry, in which receding parallels remain parallel and do not converge in

a vanishing point. Although axonometry has a long history in the East—originating in ancient China and playing a major role in Japanese painting—the lectures will focus on its Western avatars, especially on its appeal since the late 18th century, in fields as diverse as architecture and architectural history, archaeology, crystallography, optical physiology, geometry, mechanical drawing, painting, and philosophy. Crisscrossing various disciplines, most notably the history of art and the history of science, the lectures will ponder the question: why did axonometry, which was independently discovered, forgotten, and rediscovered several times in history, take hold only at the dawn of modernity? Valued either for its limpidity or for its ambiguity, axonometry has received its most celebrated emblem in the Necker cube, a figure that can be read in mutually exclusive ways.

March 22: El Lissitzky: Axonometry as "Symbolic Form"?

March 29: From Denis Diderot to William Farish: Mechanical Drawing and Its Failed Encounter with Industry

April 5: From Crystallography to Josef Albers via the Necker Cube: Transparency versus Ambiguity

April 19: Architectural Rationalism and the Worm's-Eye View

April 26: Theo van Doesburg versus Walter Gropius: Axonometry as the Graphic Esperanto of Modernist Architecture

May 3: The Postwar Resurgence of Axonometry: From Alison and Peter Smithson to Minimalist Sculptors

About the A. W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts

Since 1949 the preeminent A. W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts have presented the best in contemporary thought and scholarship on the subject of the fine arts. The program itself is named for Andrew W. Mellon, founder of the National Gallery of Art, who gave the nation his art collection and funds to build the West Building, which opened to the public in 1941.

Past speakers have included Sir Kenneth Clark, T. J. Clark, Thomas Crow, E. H. Gombrich, Michael Fried, Mary Miller, Helen Vendler, Irene Winter, Alexander Nemerov, Hal Foster, and, most recently, Wu Hung. For a full list, visit www.nga.gov/research/casva/meetings/mellon-lectures-in-the-fine-arts.html.

About Yve-Alain Bois

A specialist in 20th-century European and American art, Yve-Alain Bois is recognized as an expert on a wide range of artists, from Henri Matisse and Pablo Picasso to Piet Mondrian, Barnett Newman, and Ellsworth Kelly. He has curated and co-curated a number of influential exhibitions, including *Picasso Harlequin 1917–1937* (2008); *Matisse and Picasso: A Gentle Rivalry* (1999); *L'informe: mode d'emploi* (1996); and *Piet Mondrian, A Retrospective* (1994). His books include *Ellsworth Kelly: Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings, Reliefs, and Sculpture*, vol. 1, 1940–1953 (2015); *Art Since 1900* (with Benjamin Buchloh, Hal Foster, and Rosalind Krauss, 2004); *Matisse and Picasso* (1998); *Formless: A User's Guide* (with Rosalind Krauss, 1997); and *Painting as Model* (1990).

A professor in the School of Historical Studies at the Institute for Advanced Study since 2005, Bois was previously Attaché de recherche (1977–1981) and Chargé de recherche (1981–1983) at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique. He has taught at Johns Hopkins University (1983–1991) and at Harvard University, where he was Joseph Pulitzer, Jr., Professor of Modern Art (1991–2005) and chair of the department of history of art and architecture (2002–2005). A cofounder of Éditions Macula (1976) and a coeditor of the journal *October* since 1991, Bois is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (elected 2005) and the recipient of the Alfred H. Barr, Jr., Award (2001).

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Titles and lecture schedule added.

Press Contact:

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General Information

The National Gallery of Art and its Sculpture Garden are at all times free to the public. They are located on the National Mall between 3rd and 9th Streets at Constitution Avenue NW, and are open Monday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The Gallery is closed on December 25 and January 1. For information call (202) 737-4215 or visit the Gallery's Web site at www.nga.gov. Follow the Gallery on Facebook at www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt, Twitter at www.twitter.com/ngadc, and Instagram at <http://instagram.com/ngadc>.

Visitors will be asked to present all carried items for inspection upon entering. Checkrooms are free of charge and located at each entrance. Luggage and other oversized bags must be presented at the 4th Street entrances to the East or West Building to permit x-ray screening and must be deposited in the checkrooms at those entrances. For the safety of visitors and the works of art, nothing may be carried into the Gallery on a visitor's back. Any bag or other items that cannot be carried reasonably and safely in some other manner must be left in the checkrooms. Items larger than 17 by 26 inches cannot be accepted by the Gallery or its checkrooms.

For additional press information please call or send inquiries to:

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